

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 IO-13 OMB-01 AID-05

ARA-10 ACDA-07 /114 W

-----038101 220727Z /17

R 211640Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7670

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1412

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UK, MR

SUBJECT: BRITISH AMBASSADOR NOTES MARKED SHIFT IN MAURITANIAN ATTITUDES

TOWARDS SOVIETS

REF: (A) ABIDJAN 5888,. (B) RABAT 3289

1. DAKAR-BASED BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA POWELL-JONES REPORTED JUNE 15 THAT HE HAD BEEN STRUCK BY MARKED SHIFT SINCE HIS LAST EXTENDED VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT FALL 1976 IN ATTITUDES EXPRESSED BY SENIOR MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT (GIRM) OFFICIALS TOWARD SOVIET UNION AND ITS CLIENTS.

2. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH, WHO ALWAYS BEFORE RESORTED TO ELEGANT CIRCUMLOCUTIONS, REFERRED EXPLICITLY DURING RECENT MEETING WITH POWELL-JONES, TO "USSR AND "SOVIETS" IN
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COURSE OF DISCUSSING DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
(IMPLYING CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS).

3. MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OULD MOUKNASS DURING EXCHANGE WITH POWELL-JONES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA OBSERVED THAT MPLA "GOVERNMENT" OF ANGOLA HAD BEEN INSTALLED AND KEPT IN POWER " BY CUBANS AND THOSE BEHIND THEM, THE SOVIETS".

4. IN RESPONSE TO POWELL -JONES' QUESTION, I SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S SHIFT IN TERMINOLOGY CAN PERHAPS BE EXPLAINED BY SHABA INVASION AND STRIKING SUCCESS OULD DADDAHS OLD FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE MOBUTU HAD IN PORTRAYING INVASION AS CUBAN/SOVIET EXERCISE AND IN PERSUADING AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO HIS POINT OF VIEW.SHIFT UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTS AS WELL (A) INCREASINGLY MOREPUBLIC RECOGNITION OF SOVIET THREAT TO AFRICAN TRANQUILITY POST ANGOLA) BY TWO OTHER OLD FREINDS AND COLLEAGUES, SENGHOR AND HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, AND (B) IMPACT OF CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH MOROCCANS (KING, ROAL COUNSELORS, PM, AND FOREIGNMINISTER). SO FAR AS MOUKNASS IS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, I SUGGESTED THAT MINISTER IS SOPHISTICATED DIPLOMATIST WHO ROUTEINELY EMPLOYS CONCEPTS AND LANGUAGE HE BELIEVES WILL BEST EVOKE REACTION/RESPONSE HE DESIRS, AND RECALLED VIGOROUS LECTURE MOUKNASS GAVE ME IN JANUARY 1976 ABOUT BEACHEADS SOVIETS HAD ESTABLISHED UP AND DOWN WEST AFRICAN COAST FROM ANGOLA TO GUINEA CULMINATING IN THEIR MAJOR PRESENCE IN ALGERIA.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE MY SKEPTICISM RE SIGNIFICANCE MOUKNASS' CALLED ATTENTION TO SMALL YET SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN LANGUAGE AND ATTITUDE WHICH HAS OCCURED GRADUALLY OVER PAST YEAR OR SO. MAURITANIAN OFFICIALS (CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FROM MIDDLE UP TO TOP) ARE ARTICULATING MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED APPRECIATION OF SOVIET OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS IN AFRICA THAN
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THEY DID IN 1975 (WHATEVER THEIR PRIVATE ANALYSES AND BELIEFS MAY HAVE BEEN THEN). MOREOVER, SINCE PRESIDENT PUBLICLY PRAISED US ECONOMIC HELP IN DECEMBER 1976 STATE OF NATION SPEECH, INCREASING UMBER OF GIRM OFFICIALS IN DIPLOMATIC ANDPRIVATE CONVERSATIONS HAVE MATTER-OF-FACTLY DECLARED THEIR RECOGNITION OF MAURITANIA'S PHILOSOPHICAL COMMUNITY WITH WEST AND SPECIFICALLY WITH UNITED STATES, AND THEIR REALIZATION THAT MAURITANIA'S ABILITY TO DEVELOP ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND POLITICALLY IN ITS OWN WAY IS A FUNCTION OF WESTERN INTEREST, ACQUIESCENCE, AND STRENGTH.

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
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